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ABSTRACT

This booklet for juvenile readers describes the creation, structure, and activities of the United Nations. The book also examines how the role of the United Nations has changed since the end of the Cold War, citing specific UN actions and the issues surrounding difficult and expensive operations. The booklet provides an overview of ideas about how the organization can successfully respond to future crises and considers the debate over what kinds of future role, if any, the United States should have in the United Nations. The teachers' guide offers classroom activities, handouts, and test materials around which teachers can create a comprehensive lesson plan to help students understand the United Nations' evolving role in international events especially its peacekeeping and humanitarian missions of the last 50 years. (EH)

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THE UNITED NATIONS AT WORK

The Challenge of Building Global Peace

By Tim Walker and Amy N. Edwards

Close Up Publishing

Close Up Foundation
Stephen A. Janger, President

The Close Up Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that encourages responsible participation in the democratic process through educational programs and publications in government and citizenship. Since its founding in 1970, Close Up has been committed to developing new and better ways for young people, teachers, and a widening circle of citizens of all ages to gain a practical understanding of how public policy affects their lives and how individual and collective efforts affect public policy.

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Half a Century with the United Nations

The birth of the United Nations in October 1945—two months after the end of World War II—was truly a historic event. Never before in history had so many nations come together to form an international organization dedicated to preserving worldwide peace. But the destruction, instability, and fear that World War II left behind were sure to make the UN's mission difficult to achieve. At the time of its creation, many world leaders wondered: How can a body composed of fifty nations of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds be truly united? Will aggressive nations be deterred by the United Nations? Can the United Nations really bring peace and stability to the world?

Fifty years later, the United Nations has more than 180 member nations and these questions are still being asked. Virtually every global crisis—civil war, human rights, poverty, starvation—has been placed at the UN's door. Over the years, the United Nations has been praised, criticized, and even denounced by many in the international community. Although most would agree that the United Nations has accomplished a great deal during its first five decades of existence, many argue that the body has failed in what most say is its most important function—the prevention of war. Others believe that only the United Nations lies between order and chaos.

The debate over the United Nations continues on its fiftieth anniversary. Although the 1990s have been free from superpower military competition, there has been no shortage of international crises: renewed nationalism, famine, civil wars, and overpopulation, to name just a few. Is the United Nations up to the challenge of dealing with the post-Cold War world? Some critics believe that the United Nations has been ineffective in tackling global problems and should be reformed. Others even argue that there is no need for the United Nations at all. However, the United Nations has many supporters, including most world leaders. They believe that the world would gradually sink into total chaos if the United Nations were dismantled.

The United Nations at Work takes a look at this global organization in recognition of its fiftieth birthday. The first section focuses on the creation of the United Nations, its structure, and its mission. The second and third sections look at how and where the United Nations has carried out its mission and how it has succeeded or failed. The last section debates what role the United States should play in the United Nations and asks if U.S. foreign policy interests are best served by acting independently or in accordance with the United Nations.

The Origins of the United Nations

During the first fourteen years of the twentieth century, the nations of Europe competed with one another for land and military power. This competition escalated into one of history's most destructive wars, World War I. The United States joined the Allied forces of France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and twenty other nations to secure victory over the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

With the war over, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson turned his attention to making peace. He called World War I "the war to end all wars," and he hoped that the terms of settlement would ensure freedom and peace for the world. Wilson and representatives from more than thirty countries, including the victorious Allies, met at Versailles in France to negotiate a peace treaty in 1919.

President Wilson offered peace proposals in a plan he called the "Fourteen Points." Wilson wanted freedom of the seas, free trade, and a limit on armaments for all nations. Most important, however, was his proposal to form an association of nations that would work together to promote and preserve worldwide peace. The Allied countries and several other nations agreed with Wilson's proposals and came together to form the League of Nations.

World War II and the Atlantic Charter

From its beginning, however, the League of Nations was unable to prevent military aggression (see box, p. 10). The League's failure at maintaining global peace was evidenced by the outbreak of World War II in the late 1930s. By March 1939, Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, completed the takeover of Austria and Czechoslovakia. When Germany attacked Poland in September of that year, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

Meanwhile, Japan was aggressively moving into parts of Asia, such as French Indochina (now Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), and the Philippines, which were of vital interest to the United States. When the United States tried to stop Japanese imperialism by imposing a trade embargo, Japan bombed U.S. military bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. After the attack, the United States declared war on Japan, and three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

In August 1941, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had met to discuss how to win the war and how to preserve a lasting post-war peace.

The two leaders issued the Atlantic Charter, which sought peace, freedom, cooperation, and security among all nations. These goals were to be achieved under the supervision of a "permanent system of general security." The Atlantic Charter's principles were endorsed by twenty-six allies in the United Nations Declaration signed on January 1, 1942.

Thus, Roosevelt and Churchill laid the foundation for a new world organization that would keep the peace after

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In 1945, world leaders gathered in San Francisco to sign the UN Charter. Pictured here, U.S. President Harry S. Truman (second from left) stands near U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, signing the document.

World War II was ended. At a later meeting at Yalta in the Soviet Union, the same two leaders and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin also called for a conference on creating a new world organization.

Allies Form the United Nations. As the United Nations Conference on International Organization opened on April 25, 1945, in San Francisco, the world was recovering from the second global war in less than thirty years. The death and destruction left by World War II were fresh in people's minds, and world leaders were strongly committed to preventing a third such tragedy for future generations. Leaders discussed how to keep international peace and order after World War II. The victorious allies of the war hoped to forge a worldwide system of security in which nations would agree to act together against any other nation that threatened or broke the peace—a doctrine known as collective security.

The UN Charter. The UN Charter, a treaty among all of the United Nations member states, serves as the world body's constitution. The UN's aim is to help "encourage friendly relations among nations and achieve international cooperation." The five large allied powers of World War II—China, France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States—worked together to draft a document that they thought the whole world would readily accept. The United States had the greatest influence in the Charter's creation, and the form of the Charter greatly resembles that of the U.S. Constitution.

A lengthy document, the UN Charter consists of a preamble and more than 100 articles that set forth the purposes, structure, and powers of the United Nations. The preamble to the Charter outlines the main purposes of the organization:

- to save future generations from the "scourge of war";
- to develop friendly relations among states;
- to promote cooperation and justice in solving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems; and
- to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Organization of the United Nations

Today the United Nations has 184 members—the original 51 members and the 133 nations that have been admitted since its founding. More than eighty nations that were formerly under colonial rule have been admitted to the United Nations as sovereign, independent states since 1945. Under the UN Charter, membership is open to peace-loving, sovereign states that accept the duties of the Charter and that are, in the UN's judgment, willing and able to carry out those duties.

The United Nations has been called a "family" of organizations. The United Nations is composed of six principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. When officials were developing the UN system in 1945, they recognized that the organization might have to be expanded to meet new challenges. Therefore, they empowered the three main organs—the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council—to establish "subsidiary organs." Since 1945, the United Nations has established many such subsidiaries and entered into relationships with twenty independent organizations. They include such bodies as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The General Assembly. Composed of all member states, the General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly has the right to discuss and make recommendations on all matters within the scope of the Charter. Although it has no power to compel action by any government, the General Assembly's recommendations carry moral weight as an expression of world opinion.

The scope of the General Assembly is broad enough to respond to international issues such as hunger, poverty, sickness, and war. The annual agenda of the General Assembly includes more than 150 items that reflect the problems of the world. A large number of items, such as conflicts in the Middle East, economic development, protection of the environment, and human rights issues, have remained on the agenda for years. As new problems arise, the General Assembly makes time to deal with them. With so much to do and so many members, it follows a rather formal procedural pattern. This always includes a lengthy session where representatives state their nations' positions. Each member state has one representative and one vote in the General Assembly.

The Assembly meets once a year, although it can be called for an emergency session in a crisis. Seventeen emergency sessions—dealing with issues such

United Nations/Photo by M. Grant

At left, inside the General Assembly. Below, the headquarters of the United Nations in New York City.

United Nations

as disarmament, peacekeeping operations, and economic problems—have been conducted in attempts to resolve special problems.

The Security Council. The UN Security Council is assigned the task of maintaining peace and security throughout the world within the UN's guidelines. Five permanent members—China, France, Great Britain, the Russian Federation, and the United States—and ten nonpermanent, or elected, members make up the Security Council. The nonpermanent members are chosen by the General Assembly for staggered two-year terms; five are elected each year. The ten nonpermanent seats are allotted as follows: five seats to Asia and Africa, one to eastern Europe, two to Latin America, and two to western European and other states. This system provides what is called "area representation."

The Security Council is always ready to meet to discuss problems of peace and security. The Security Council has the power to either try to resolve the situation through peaceful measures or to use force to change the situation. These powers are to be exercised only after the disputing countries have failed to reach a solution. The United Nations generally expects that a regional attempt be made to resolve a conflict before the United Nations is asked to intervene. If a dispute cannot be resolved by the Security Council, the General Assembly is called to act on the situation.

The UN Charter lists several means for settling disputes: arbitration, judgment by a court, mediation, and negotiation. Under the Charter, all members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. The Council may choose to intervene in a dispute if members believe that a delayed settlement may jeopardize peace. When a dispute leads to open warfare, the Council may decide on cease-fire directives, enforcement measures, or collective military action. Sometimes it

Why the League of Nations Failed

When British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt met in 1941 to map out a post-World War II world, there was doubt about creating an organization to preserve global peace. This reservation, particularly on the part of President Roosevelt, was because of the failure of the League of Nations after World War I.

The League of Nations, created by President Woodrow Wilson and the victorious allies in 1920, failed to prevent another global conflict from occurring. By the late 1930s, Germany's armies were marching over eastern Europe, Japan had invaded Manchuria, and the Italians had seized Ethiopia. Why was the 69-member League of Nations unable to stop this aggression and head off another world war?

The League of Nations was weakened from the outset when the United States rejected membership. Because the League was his brainchild, President Wilson pushed hard for U.S. membership. However, the Covenant of the League was written into the Treaty of Versailles, which formally laid out the terms of Germany's surrender after World War I. Because the U.S. Senate must ratify all treaties, the United States' entry into the League was therefore at the mercy of the predominantly isolationist Congress. Like the majority

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The leaders of the "Big Four" powers (left to right, Vittorio Orlando of Italy, Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Woodrow Wilson of the United States) met in Versailles, France, to negotiate the terms of Germany's surrender after World War I. The plans for the League of Nations emerged from this meeting.

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of Americans, many senators thought that the United States should not get entangled in conflicts around the world. They believed that this would certainly occur if the United States became a member of the League. Despite President Wilson's urging, the Senate refused to allow U.S. membership in the League.

The absence of the world's most powerful country undermined the League of Nation's ability to curb military aggression. During the 1920s, many countries, including Italy and Germany, rearmed themselves despite the League's efforts at global disarmament. Many world leaders at the time believed the rearmament of these countries would eventually lead to another war.

During the 1930s, Germany began rolling over parts of eastern Europe, Italy seized Ethiopia, and Japan invaded Manchuria. Powerless to stop this aggression, the League could only watch as the world headed for the bloodiest conflict in history—World War II. Beginning in 1939 and ending in 1945, World War II would take more than 34 million lives and devastate an entire continent. Although the League of Nations was unable to prevent World War II and was officially dismantled in 1945, it nonetheless laid a foundation upon which world leaders could build another more successful world organization—the United Nations—after World War II.

sends UN observers or peacekeeping forces to help reduce tensions in a troubled area.

The legal limits on Security Council action expand if a direct threat or breach of peace occurs. In such a case, the Council has the right to take stronger action, such as requiring member states to apply diplomatic and economic sanctions on the offending nation. In addition, the Council has the right to request member states' armed forces to enforce peace.

Each member of the Security Council has one vote. Decisions on procedural matters require a majority of nine of the fifteen members, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. In addition, a member may not vote in any decision concerning a dispute in which it is involved.

A permanent member can defeat, or veto, a resolution by voting "nay." Each permanent member has used the veto power at least once. If a permanent member does not support a decision, but does not wish to veto it, that member can abstain from voting.

The Economic and Social Council. The function of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), broadly speaking, is to improve the lives of people. ECOSOC makes recommendations and initiates activities relating to economic development, human rights, natural resources, population, social welfare, science and technology, world trade, and other economic and social issues. The fifty-four members of ECOSOC coordinate the work of the specialized agencies associated with the United Nations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and

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the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Trusteeship Council. The Trusteeship Council was established to keep an eye on the administration of certain territories before they achieved independence. In 1994, the Pacific island of Palau, the last trust territory, became independent and a member state of the United Nations. Although the UN Trusteeship Council still exists, it only meets on an extraordinary basis.

The International Court of Justice. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), sometimes called the World Court, sits at The Hague, Netherlands. The ICJ is made up of fifteen judges who serve nine-year terms and are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The judges represent different legal systems of the world.

Many people agree that the idea of an international court is commendable; however, the Court has faced many practical problems. Not all UN members accept the Court's rulings, and if nations do accept rulings, the Court faces the problem of enforcing its decisions. For example, in 1981 the World Court ruled that South Africa had to leave Namibia because South Africa had no right to be there. However, the South African government did not obey the Court's ruling, and remained in Namibia.

Many governments tend to regard the enforcement of international law as infringing upon their ability to be self-governing. In addition, many countries complain that the ICJ is too controlled by developed countries. This seeming lack of respect and disregard of the rulings has limited the powers of the World Court.

The Secretariat. The Secretariat consists of the staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the United Nations. More than 25,000 men and women from more than 150 nations are employed in cities throughout the world in administrative or field positions. The UN secretary-general, who heads the Secretariat, is required to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which may threaten international peace and security and to use his or her good judgment to help resolve international disputes.

Choosing the secretary-general for a five-year term is a lengthy and sometimes controversial political process that includes recommendation by the Security Council and approval by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. The current secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt, took office in January 1993. Duties of the secretary-general include planning an organizational budget, supervising day-to-day operations, offering political leadership, serving as a diplomatic liaison, and acting as a ceremonial head of the United Nations in formal affairs.

Maintaining Peace and Security

The main function of the United Nations, as detailed in the UN Charter, is to preserve and protect international peace and security. Under the Charter, member states are to settle their disputes by means that do not endanger international peace, security, and justice. They are to refrain from the threat or use of force against any state or in any other manner inconsistent

The UN emblem is recognized around the world as a symbol of peace and international cooperation.

with the purposes of the United Nations. In addition, member states are to "practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors." Although living up to these ideals has often proven difficult, the organization has made efforts to preserve and protect international peace and security through mediation, negotiation, and the use of UN armed peacekeeping forces.

Mediation and Negotiation

On many occasions, the United Nations has been successful at negotiating peace settlements without having to use military force. In these cases, the countries in conflict obeyed the demands of the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice and ended the conflict. Two examples of successful mediation occurred in the Middle East.

The Iran-Iraq War. In 1980, Iraq invaded Iran over a long-standing dispute about control of the strategically and economically important Shatt al Arab waterway. The United Nations tried to end the conflict at its beginning when the Security Council urged the two countries to negotiate an agreement to stop the fighting.

Between 1980 and 1986, the Security Council adopted seven resolutions calling for a withdrawal of forces, an end to attacks on civilians, an agreement over the use and protections of the waterways, and an exchange of prisoners of war. The resolutions were ineffective because each country was accusing the other of further wrongdoings.

Members of the Security Council were concerned that the Iran-Iraq conflict could have dire repercussions in the Middle East and around the world. As a result, Resolution 598, adopted in 1987, set up the framework for a cease-fire agreement.

Similar to previous resolutions, Resolution 598 called for an exchange of prisoners and peace talks. However, Resolution 598 went further and threatened to impose sanctions on whichever party did not accept it. After some compromises, the two countries agreed to the cease-fire. This achievement is considered by many to be one of the UN's finest.

Israel and the Arab States. In 1947, the United Nations voted to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Few Arabs supported the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel because land was being taken from some Arabs. At the same time, Jewish occupants of Palestine claimed territory extending beyond the boundaries specified in the UN partition plan. Nevertheless, the new nation of

Israel was born on May 15, 1948. Since then, the two sides have fought a series of wars.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the United Nations adopted two resolutions attempting to establish the principles for a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and Arabs. In 1967, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242, calling for an end to all declarations of war; the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories captured from the Arabs; mutual respect by each ethnic group of their neighbors' independence and right to live in peace; and settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem. UN Security Council Resolution 338, passed in 1973, states that the Resolution 242 proposals should be pursued through negotiations.

Since that time, the UN General Assembly has had many Arab-Israeli issues on its annual agenda, including refugee relief and resettlement, the creation of an independent Palestinian state, human rights violations, Israeli withdrawal from conquered territories, and numerous security concerns ranging from specific acts of terrorism to military border clashes and full-scale war.

In an unprecedented move toward peace, on September 19, 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir Arafat signed a peace accord at the White House in Washington, D.C. While many world leaders applauded the move, UN officials realized that achieving peace in that volatile region will be a challenge. However, many experts believe that the peace agreement is a step in the right direction.

Peacekeeping and the Use of UN Armed Forces

Peaceful negotiations are not always successful in resolving differences. In such times, UN armed forces, made up of troops from member states, have been called upon to bring an end to the conflict. The degree of involvement varies in different situations. For example, UN troops participated in warfare in the Korean and the Persian Gulf Wars. But in the continuing case of Bosnia, UN troops have been used mainly to prevent the escalation of the war.

Troops and Observers. UN peacekeeping operations are mounted in unstable areas to help control conflicts while political leaders discuss a settlement. These operations can involve military observer missions made up of unarmed officers, armed peacekeeping forces, or a combination of both. Military observers often continue to patrol areas after other peacekeeping forces have left to ensure that an agreed-upon settlement is honored. Peacekeeping forces are made up of troops representing sixty-five UN countries and are financially supported by all member states. The soldiers of the UN peacekeeping forces wear the military uniform of their nations' armed forces, but also wear a light blue helmet or cap that identifies them as UN peacekeepers.

Peacekeeping operations are supervised by the UN secretary-general, who is responsible for briefing certain countries about the peacekeeping operations that will be carried out in their area. As stated in the Charter, these "host countries," and often the other countries involved, must agree to the operation before it is imple-

The United Nations' First Fifty Years

1945 • End of World War II.
• United Nations established; the General Assembly meets for the first time on October 24.

1947 • United Nations mediates in Palestine in its first mission of conflict resolution.

1949 • North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formed.

1950 • UN peacekeeping force is sent to Korea (and remains there until 1953).

1955 • Warsaw Pact, Soviet-led military alliance of eastern European nations, formed.

1956 • United Nations organizes cease-fire in Middle East and sends a peacekeeping force.
• International Atomic Energy Agency established.

1962 • United Nations mediates between United States and USSR during the Cuban missile crisis.

1966 • United Nations develops a treaty banning nuclear weapons from outer space.

1967 • United Nations organizes a cease-fire between Israel and Arabs during the Six-Day War.

1968 • United Nations develops the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

1973 • United Nations establishes a cease-fire between Israel and Arabs to end the Yom Kippur War.

1974 • United Nations begins supervision of cease-fire between Israel and Syria and reestablishes buffer zone.

1978 • United Nations sends observers to oversee withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

1980 • Iran-Iraq War breaks out.

1988 • United Nations successfully mediates a peace agreement between Iran and Iraq.

1990 • Iraq invades Kuwait. United Nations denounces the action and sends a U.S.-led multinational force to the region.

1991 • Persian Gulf War begins; UN forces oust Iraq from Kuwait in February.

1992 • United Nations sends multinational force to Somalia to secure supply routes for emergency food aid to starving Somalis.
• War in Bosnia-Herzegovina breaks out. The United Nations imposes an arms embargo on all sides in the conflict.
• United Nations sends humanitarian aid to Bosnian refugees and soon deploys peacekeeping forces to prevent further Serb aggression.

1994 • In April, the war in Rwanda creates a massive refugee crisis. United Nations sends humanitarian aid.
• UN Conference on Population and Development is held in Cairo.

1995 • United Nations declares the international Year of Tolerance.

National Archives

UN troops on patrol in South Korea during the Korean War.

mented. While members of an operation are responsible for maintaining peace and security in an area, they may not become directly involved in the conflict. For example, peacekeeping soldiers must not take up arms against one country or another except in self-defense.

The Changing Nature of the Peacekeeping Forces. During its first forty years, the United Nations conducted only thirteen peacekeeping operations. Then, in just six years, from 1988 to 1994, twenty-one new missions were launched, each of them draining money and resources from the United Nations. UN officials estimated that midway through the year, the 1994 UN peacekeeping missions had already cost more than $4.5 billion.

The purpose of peacekeeping operations has changed over the years. From the 1950s through the 1980s, most missions involved "traditional operations." The United Nations undertook these largely military activities to ensure that cease-fire agreements were obeyed, to monitor buffer zones between disputing parties, and to prevent a recurrence of fighting while peacemakers tried to negotiate a settlement between the warring parties. Only six of the twenty-one recent operations have been traditional operations. Others were implemented to ensure that both parties were obeying previously negotiated settlement agreements. In addition, many recent UN peacekeeping missions involve civilian, as well as military, activities.

Korea. In June 1950, communist North Korea attacked South Korea, a country that was influenced and supported by the United States. The Security Council called for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of North Korean forces to north of the 38th parallel, the line that divides North and South Korea. However, fighting continued, and two days later, UN member states agreed to assist South Korea by using troops to

counter attacks and restore stability in the region. The United States took the lead and provided the majority of the troops.

By October, the North Koreans had retreated to behind the 38th parallel. However, the war intensified in 1951 after hundreds of thousands of Chinese communist soldiers poured into Korea. Fighting continued until July 1953, when an armistice agreement was signed.

Some praised the mission as a success because North Korean aggression in South Korea was stopped by the U.S.-led UN forces. However, critics argue that the Korean War only deepened the mistrust between North and South Korea that has lasted to the present day.

The Persian Gulf War. In August 1990, Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, taking over the country and its oil fields. The UN Security Council condemned the Iraqi invasion and enforced a comprehensive mandatory economic embargo on Iraq and occupied areas of Kuwait. The United States and twenty-seven other nations deployed combat troops, naval forces, and air forces to the area.

The United Nations authorized its members to "use all necessary means" to make Iraqi troops withdraw from Kuwait after January 15, 1991. When talks failed to persuade Iraq to withdraw, U.S.-led allied forces began an air attack. A ground attack that began in February quickly forced the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. In April, Iraq accepted UN cease-fire Resolution 687, which required Iraq to destroy or dismantle all chemical and biological weapons and all ballistic missiles with a range longer than ninety-five miles. The resolution also required Iraq to open all of its military installations for UN inspection. In addition, an arms embargo prevented Iraq from obtaining new weapons to rebuild its military.

Experts disagree over the success of the Persian Gulf War. Some point out the war freed a nation, practically destroyed the military of a tyrant leader, and helped stabilize world oil prices. Furthermore, the United Nations established a plan for controlling arms in the area, a plan that could prevent a similar war from breaking out. However, those who say that the effort was not a complete success point out that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is still in power despite allied efforts to remove him and despite his defeat in the war. In addition, they say that the region remains unstable and vulnerable to another war and that Iraq may still be violating weapons agreements.

U.S. Department of Defense

In February 1991, the U.S.-led allied force liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Many believe that the victory in the Persian Gulf was an example of how the United Nations can succeed in defeating military aggression.

Bosnia. In 1991, the former communist country of Yugoslavia broke up into six independent republics. Serbia, the most militarily powerful of the republics, began a military campaign to create "Greater Serbia," through which they wanted to incorporate parts of the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the Muslim and Croat populations of Bosnia did not want to be under Serb control and resisted the campaign. A military conflict between the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats of Bosnia broke out.

When Yugoslavia began to splinter into warring ethnic groups, the United Nations, like individual countries, was reluctant to get involved, citing its tradition of nonintervention in the domestic disputes of sovereign nations. Nevertheless, in 1991, the United Nations voted to impose an arms embargo on all Yugoslav republics.

However, when the war in Bosnia worsened in late 1992 and concern rose that nationalist violence could spread into neighboring countries, resolution of the conflict became a top UN priority. From 1992 through 1994, the world body was working in Bosnia on many fronts—diplomatic, military, and humanitarian. When diplomatic initiatives failed to persuade the Serbs to stop their military campaign against the non-Serb population in Bosnia, the United Nations voted to impose economic sanctions on Serbia.

The most prominent UN role in Bosnia has been its peacekeeping mission—one of the largest in the organization's history. The mission of the UN troops in Bosnia is not to roll back Serb aggression but merely to guard and protect Muslim populations in certain areas, called "safe havens," from Serb attacks.

Although the UN troops have been quite successful at containing many Serb attacks and the economic sanctions have strangled Serbia's economy, the war in Bosnia raged on through 1994. Many experts believe that, despite the UN's humanitarian achievements in the war-torn country, the world body has failed in the former Yugoslavia because it has yet to end the conflict. Defenders of the United Nations respond that it is doing all it can considering that member states, including the United States, refuse to commit armed forces to fight the Serbs and push them out of Muslim areas.

UN Peacekeeping: "A Crisis of Credibility"

To many experts, the problems facing the United Nations in Bosnia provide a case study of how ineffective the UN's peacekeeping mission has become. Additional recent setbacks in Somalia and Rwanda have contributed to this belief. One observer said the United Nations is facing a "crisis of credibility."

The organization is burdened by a growing number of conflicts, a declining number of troops (many of whom have no training in peacekeeping missions), and a lack of money. On top of these burdens, the United Nations is also facing a new role: peace enforcer, instead of peacekeeper. A more difficult and dangerous job, the United Nations as peace enforcer has had to deal with guerrilla groups, warlords, paramilitary groups, and armed citizens. Because these factions are not associated with any govern-

ment, the United Nations cannot impose sanctions or other pressure to stop or contain them.

Many experts believe that the United Nations is no longer militarily or financially equipped to become involved in every international crisis; even so, new peacekeeping operations continue to be conducted. At the end of 1994, more than 70,000 peacekeeping personnel from seventy countries were serving in seventeen UN missions across the world. The current cost of these activities—estimated at more than $4.5 billion a year—is further taxing the organization and causing discord among its leaders. Many experts believe that UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has committed UN peacekeeping forces to too many conflicts in too many regions. In addition, many countries, including the United States, have withheld portions of their promised monies because of opposition to certain peacekeeping missions. This lack of cooperation has pushed the organization to its limits.

Some member states have offered proposals to improve the United Nations' peacekeeping performance. They suggest:

- establishing a UN "early-warning office" that monitors world trouble-spots;
- organizing permanent conflict-resolution committees in various parts of the world; and
- deploying peacekeeping forces to unstable regions to prevent the start of fighting.

Although experts, world leaders, and UN officials disagree on what measures to take to make peacekeeping more successful, most agree that, unless something is done, the United Nations' credibility as a peacemaker and a peacekeeper will continue to suffer.

Improving Human Welfare Around the World

Although most observers and many world leaders believe the United Nations' most important function is to prevent or stop wars and conflicts, more of the UN's time, efforts, and money go toward promoting economic and social progress. More than 80 percent of the budgets of the UN's many global agencies goes toward human welfare issues, including development, education, the environment, food, health, and technical assistance.

Improving the conditions of less-developed countries has been one of the UN's top goals over the past fifty years. Article 55 of the UN Charter declares that the world community must "promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development, . . . the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations."

The UN's efforts in this area have focused on less developed countries, sometimes called LDCs. For more than forty years, the United Nations, other international organizations, and governments have worked together to promote development in these impoverished countries. Many members of the United Nations believe that improving the lives of the impoverished people around the world is essential if the United Nations is to build a secure worldwide peace.

UN Photo 146 502/Peter Magubane

The famine in Africa is just one of many humanitarian crises the United Nations has had to confront.

Economic Development: Helping Countries Help Themselves

The richest one-fifth of the world's population controls about 85 percent of total global economic activity, while the poorest one-fifth controls only 1 percent. Because of their poor economic situations, less-developed nations are more vulnerable to poverty, starvation, political instability, and civil war. The United Nations has placed great emphasis on improving the welfare of these countries over the years because it believes that

the root cause of war and conflict is economic desperation. Therefore, to promote world peace and stability, the United Nations believes that it must help developing countries.

The Burden of Decolonization. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, many nations in Africa and Asia became independent. After spending hundreds of years as colonies of Western powers, these nations were now free to govern themselves. However, many of the newly independent nations were unable to build prosperous economies and secure democratic institutions. Consequently, dictatorships ruled in many new nations, and poverty and disease spread. These countries were going backward economically and becoming more desperate.

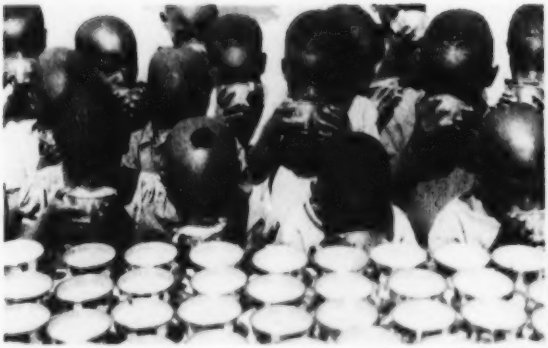
The United Nations believed that if this situation worsened, global instability would spread, inevitably creating conflict and violence. Therefore, the United Nations made economic development of less developed countries a major campaign.

The Development Decades. In 1960, the United Nations declared the next ten years the UN Development Decade. In a resolution adopted by the General Assembly, the United Nations announced that the goal of the decade was to "accelerate progress toward self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations and their social advancement." Over the following years, the United Nations adopted programs of action, sponsored numerous conferences, and recommended development strategies. Among the conferences were the UN Conference on Trade and Development in 1964, the UN Development Program in 1965, and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development in 1969. By the end of the decade, most experts agreed that the United Nations had done an outstanding job of focusing worldwide attention on the problem of economic misery in less developed countries.

Since the 1960s, the United Nations has declared three additional Development Decades—the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In 1974, the General Assembly called for a "New International Economic Order." The resolution stated that the New International Economic Order would be "based on equality, sovereignty, interdependence, common interest, and cooperation among States, irrespective of their economic and social systems."

However, as in so many other projects, the United Nations has had difficulty turning this admirable goal into reality. Many experts argued that establishing a New International Economic Order (NIEO) would require Western countries to surrender some of their economic sovereignty to the United Nations. Some even called the NIEO a socialist goal, because they believed it stressed equality over economic competitiveness. Overall, many experts believed that the NIEO would require a too dramatic change in the economic beliefs of the major Western countries.

In the 1990s, the United Nations' development program focuses less on changing the "international economic order" of the world and more on encouraging less developed countries to improve their industrial and agricultural base as well as their educational systems. Most observers believe that helping less devel-



United Nations relief workers travel around the world helping impoverished people. At left, children in Chad drink milk supplied by the UN's health and nutrition program. At right, a medic examines an older man in Cambodia.

oped countries to help themselves is the best tool for economic development.

Emergency Relief and Humanitarian Missions

Although achieving long-term economic development in less developed countries remains an unfulfilled goal, many observers believe that the United Nations has often proved to be an effective and quick distributor of emergency aid with an impressive record of accomplishment. They say that while the body has had a mixed record at preventing the circumstances that lead to human suffering—war and poverty, for example—it has on many occasions provided short-term relief from the suffering that results from war and other disasters.

Attacking Famine. For many years, widespread hunger has devastated the rural populations of many LDC's, particularly in Africa. The problem has gotten progressively worse. In the 1950s, one of every fifteen people in the world was malnourished. Today, that figure has risen to one of every four.

Many wealthier nations have answered the UN's call when famine threatened millions of lives, as it did in Ethiopia in the 1970s and early 1980s and in Somalia in 1992. The goal of the United Nations is to reduce the need for emergency food supplies. To achieve this, the body has offered programs and conferences to help these countries reach self-sufficiency. However, although these missions provided some important short-term relief, no lasting solutions have been found. Most experts agree that the United Nations cannot help wipe out world hunger until less developed countries reform their societies.

For example, many say that the UN mission in Somalia was unsuccessful because that country is basically at war with itself. By late 1994, no peace was in sight in Somalia. Experts feared that once again famine would kill thousands of Somalis. The mission in Somalia highlighted the UN's main problem:

Without governments making internal changes, long-term solutions to hunger and other problems are hard to reach. Nonetheless, the work of the UN's humanitarian agencies and peacekeeping forces did save the lives of thousands of Somalis in 1993.

Refugees. Another ongoing humanitarian crisis facing the United Nations is the care of refugees. The United Nations first confronted a refugee crisis in the years following World War II. After the war, millions of refugees—displaced from their homes—roamed around Europe and Asia, where the fighting had been the worst. The United Nations set up the International Refugee Organization and then, in 1951, established the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for a temporary period of three years. However, it soon became apparent that the refugee problem was one that required the supervision of a permanent organization.

The UNHCR's primary responsibility is to protect displaced civilians in war-torn countries from harm by relocating or resettling them in another country. In most cases, these refugees have few resources and cannot rely on their own governments for protection. They need an international organization like the United Nations to save their lives.

The UNHCR is playing an important role in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a three-year-old war has displaced more than 2 million people. Since 1991, the UNHCR has been charged with protecting these refugees from the war while waiting and hoping that a peace agreement can be reached. UN trucks have had to transport residents of towns under siege to safer areas. Many lives have been saved, but the fate of the Bosnian refugees will be unknown until the war in the former Yugoslavia ends.

The Agony of Rwanda. Many United Nations officials thought they had seen in Bosnia the worst refugee problem. However, in 1994, the United Nations had to confront what many officials have called the most devastating humanitarian crisis of the past fifty years.

In early 1994, a civil war broke out in Rwanda, a small but heavily populated nation in Central Africa. The conflict between the Rwandan government and the Tutsi rebels lasted for only three months, but left behind horrifying devastation. The war killed more than 500,000 Rwandans (out of a population of 8 million), drove 2.4 million refugees into neighboring Zaire, and displaced an additional 2 million inside Rwanda. Starvation and an outbreak of cholera threatened to kill even more people.

When the war in Rwanda began, no nation, including the United States, was willing to send in troops as part of a multinational UN peacekeeping force. However, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali begged UN members for emergency humanitarian aid; he said as much as $400 million would be needed. But pledges of aid were slow in coming. Eventually, as the disaster in Rwanda received media attention worldwide, the United States responded with a pledge of $31 million; the European Union soon followed with $185 million. Relief began to arrive in Rwanda by August 1994.

Many international observers believed that the United Nations was shamefully slow in helping Rwanda.

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However, others argue that the fault lay with the individual governments who did not want to get bogged down in another war-torn African country so soon after Somalia. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali called for military assistance, but members refused to offer troops for a UN force. Although many experts agreed that these nations had good reasons for not committing their soldiers to Rwanda, they contend that United Nations cannot succeed unless individual countries stay committed to take part in UN operations.

Human Rights

The United Nations first made its mark in human rights. In 1948, the General Assembly issued its Declaration of Human Rights—"a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." The United Nations called on all members of the United Nations and all peoples to promote and secure the recognition of the rights and freedoms in the Declaration. Specifically, the Declaration states that all human beings are:

- born equal in dignity and rights;
- entitled to all freedoms without distinction of any kind such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status; and
- free from slavery or servitude.

All nations hailed these principles as worthy guidelines for all governments to follow in the treatment of their people. However, because human rights is an internal issue that involves the relationship between a government and its people, the United Nations has had limited tools with which to enforce violations of human rights. In fact, the UN Charter states that the United Nations is not authorized "to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state." Because the United Nations does not permit itself to interfere in the internal matters of a country, fulfilling the goals of the Declaration of Human Rights has been very difficult.

South Africa and Apartheid. Few countries have come under more international criticism over the past fifty years

UN Photo 159206/S. Whitehouse

UN peacekeeping forces are currently stationed in more than twenty nations. Here, UN trucks pass through a destroyed city in Croatia, a former Yugoslav republic.

for human rights abuses than South Africa. Beginning in 1948, the white minority government's policy of apartheid had separated blacks (70 percent of the population) from whites. Blacks were not allowed to vote or own property. The South African government's policies were an obvious affront to the principles of the Declaration of Human Rights. But because the government was violating the human rights of its people only and not those in other countries, the United Nations could not force the South African government to change its policies.

Nonetheless, the United Nations tried everything within its power to force South Africa's ruling National Party to dismantle or at least scale back apartheid including diplomatic pressure, legal steps, and coercive measures such as excluding South Africa from many international meetings and conferences. South Africa consistently rejected the UN's measures and resolutions, stating that its racial policies were a domestic matter and therefore out of the UN's jurisdiction.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations tried to persuade its member states to pressure South Africa with economic sanctions. However, the United States and some other nations were at first reluctant to do so because South Africa was a capitalist country. Many governments did not want to contribute to the possible emergence of a communist government in South Africa. In addition, the United States had long-standing business and trade ties to South Africa. However, many Western nations eventually imposed economic sanctions on South Africa. South Africa's political and economic isolation from the international community led to the gradual dismantling of apartheid in 1990. By 1993, apartheid was gone and the majority black population was allowed to vote in national elections for the first time ever in 1994.

Experts dispute what single action or policy triggered apartheid's downfall, but most agree that a number of factors contributed. Although the United Nations did not have the authority to force South Africa to change, many observers believe that the UN's success in keeping the issue in the minds of the international community played a major role.

The Future of the United Nations

The United Nations has left its mark on virtually every major political, social, economic, and humanitarian problem that has emerged in the world since 1945, finding success but also failure. Today, fifty years after the creation of the world organization, many experts and world leaders continue to debate what the proper role of the organization should be. They stress that, with the dramatic changes in the world since the late 1980s, the United Nations must adapt to the global problems of the 1990s and beyond. Some observers wonder if the United Nations is up to the task of meeting today's challenges. They ask why a 184-member world organization cannot stop civil wars in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda or reduce the economic despair that still plagues so many parts of the world.

Some argue that these goals have not been met because the UN's member

Black South Africans were allowed to vote in national elections for the first time in April 1994. Former political prisoner Nelson Mandela was elected South Africa's president.

states refuse to commit the political and monetary support necessary to make UN missions more effective. Others respond that a huge international organization has no useful purpose in the post-Cold War world. Caught in the middle of this debate is the United States. How large a role the United States should play in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions is a hotly debated topic among U.S. policymakers.

Is the United Nations Obsolete?

Very few experts would contend that the United Nations has had unqualified success at combatting world problems over the past fifty years. Most agree that the UN's record is mixed, and that changes need to be made internally and in the attitudes of the member states to help improve its performance. However, there are some who believe that the United Nations has no constructive role to play in the world; it is basically an obsolete, hugely expensive organization.

Critics of the United Nations contend that the organization's most important role is preventing armed conflict or stopping it once it begins. Many argue that the UN's record in this area has been one of failure. They point out that since World War II, there have been more than 150 armed conflicts, and in not one case was the United Nations able to prevent bloodshed. More recently, the United Nations has been unable to provide long-term solutions to problems in war-torn

areas, such as Somalia. These experts believe that if the United Nations cannot prevent civil wars in Yugoslavia and Rwanda from breaking out, then there is no legitimate reason for it to exist in its present form. Critics say the United Nations simply lacks the authority to prevent parties from going to war. The UN Charter vows to respect national sovereignty and not meddle in a country's internal affairs. Aggressive nations, many argue, are aware of the UN's lack of legal authority, and therefore are encouraged to wage war on other nations.

Even though critics applaud the UN's relief missions and other humanitarian goals, they contend that these missions could be carried out by other organizations that are less bureaucratic, less expensive, and less political.

United Nations Still Effective. Supporters of the United Nations concede that it has not succeeded fully in preserving peace and security but believe that there is, and will always be, a place for the organization in the post-Cold War world. Many experts argue that the United Nations is being held to impossibly high expectations—as spelled out in the UN Charter in 1945—that were unrealistic to begin with. However, they point out that does not mean that the United Nations is obsolete. If the United Nations had never been formed, how many more wars would have occurred? And how many wars would still be raging without United Nations peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts? Supporters also concede that more work is needed on economic development but believe that less developed nations would be even more impoverished without the United Nations. These experts also praise the United Nations for its role as an arena for world opinion and a place where underpublicized issues, such as economic development, are spotlighted.

UN Photo 183480/84 Tzovenis

Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt became secretary-general of the United Nations in 1993.

The United Nations has many critics, but very few believe that the organization should be dismantled. Most experts agree that there is a need for a body like the United Nations in the post-Cold War world, especially as nations become more interdependent. However, they disagree on what remedies might improve the UN's performance.

Reforming the United Nations

Even the United Nations' most ardent supporters concede that the organization needs repair. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright said

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in 1993, "Forty years of neglect has left this institution flabby and out of shape." Although most would agree with this prognosis, people disagree on how to improve the organization.

Many experts believe the UN's complex system of offices and agencies prevents strong and decisive action when crises emerge. Critics contend that the UN system is more bureaucratic than the U.S. government. To ensure a more rapid UN response to world problems, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed abolishing some agencies.

Paying the Bills. Since the 1980s, the United Nations has faced a severe financial crisis. As the United Nations increases the number of peacekeeping, humanitarian, and economic development missions, costs naturally increase. Yet, members currently owe the United Nations more than $2 billion. In 1993, only 10 of 184 members had paid their obligations in full and on time. The United States owed more than $700 million of the $2 billion, followed by Russia ($500 million) and Japan ($100 million).

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged member states to pay their obligation. He warns that financial debt further weakens the peacekeeping missions in progress in Bosnia and parts of Africa. Many experts argue that the United Nations cannot function effectively in any role if it continues to be burdened by member states' unwillingness to pay their dues.

Reinventing the Mission. While many observers agree that a large part of the UN's short-term problems is based on rising costs and unpaid bills, they argue that the organization will never live up to its goals until it redefines its mission. Some believe that the United Nations is currently taking on far too many responsibilities, particularly in the peacekeeping area. Not only are these

The UN Conference on Population

In September 1994, the United Nations turned its attention to a global problem many believe will become the number one threat to international peace and stability in the twenty-first century: overpopulation. By most accounts, the earth's population will almost double in the next century, outpacing what experts call the Earth's "carrying capacity." According to world leaders, economists, and scientists, this will wreak havoc on the planet. They predict mass starvation, environmental degradation, and an extreme shortage of vital resources, over which many nations will go to war. Consequently, the UN's economic development goals will be almost impossible to achieve.

The third United Nations International Conference on Population and Development convened in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994. Unlike previous UN population conferences, the thousands of delegates and scientists at Cairo reached a consensus that overpopulation is a serious threat to global stability. However, the pro-

posed methods for slowing population growth provoked heated debate.

The majority of delegates—including those from the United States—favored a plan of action that focused on empowering women to help control birth rates; in other words, legalizing abortion and making contraception available everywhere. But objections from the Vatican and many Muslim countries over the abortion language in the report threatened to disrupt the conference. Eventually, the conference report's paragraph on abortion was worded in a manner acceptable to countries opposed to abortion. The compromise section ended up reading: "In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning."

The plan that emerged from the Cairo conference aims to stabilize world population at about 7.27 billion in 2015, up from the current population level of roughly 5.7 billion. However, 7.27 billion is well below the 12.5 billion level projected by experts if growth rates are not slowed. The plan calls for an investment of $17 billion a year until 2000 and $21.5 billion a year by 2015. In addition, the plan stresses the need to improve the educational and economic opportunities for women in less developed countries.

NASA

According to experts, Earth's population will double in the next century.

As is the case with the many conferences the United Nations has held in its first fifty years, the Cairo conference's success or failure will depend on whether countries follow up on the recommendations in the action plan. At the very least, the United Nations has again succeeded at focusing the world's attention on a problem perhaps before it turns into a catastrophe.

missions extremely expensive, but, according to critics, ineffective. Instead, some world leaders, including President Bill Clinton, have urged the United Nations to learn "how to say no" and to concentrate peacekeeping operations in regions where the mission is clear and chances for success reasonably high. Similarly, many experts say the United Nations should only invest time and money in economic development projects that have clear goals and objectives.

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Most observers, world leaders, and UN officials believe that if the organization implements reforms, the United Nations will stand a greater chance of building on its past successes. However, others maintain that even if the United Nations made these internal changes, member states, particularly the United States, must be fully committed to supporting the UN's missions.

What Role Should the United States Play in the United Nations?

The United States has a key role in the future of the United Nations. Most experts agree that the United Nations would falter if the United States withdrew from the world organization and pursued its foreign policy goals independent from the United Nations. Some U.S. experts and policymakers are suspicious of the United Nations and do not want the United States to surrender its sovereignty to the organization. Others believe that the United States must work closely with other nations in solving global problems and pursue an even stronger partnership with the United Nations.

The End of U.S. Dominance in the United Nations. The United Nations was created in large part as a result of U.S. initiative, planning, and resources. The organization has been permanently headquartered in New York and during its first ten years was dominated by the United States. However, that dominance was challenged as more and more nations became members. The decolonization of the late 1950s and early 1960s created new independent nations who were admitted as members of the United Nations. By 1960, membership swelled to 120 countries. These nations, mostly from what was called the Third World, were deeply suspicious of Western powers like the United States. They formed voting blocs to counter the large U.S. influence.

As American power and influence over UN activities diminished, many U.S. policymakers argued that the organization no longer paid sufficient attention to U.S. interests. During the Cold War, when the focus of U.S. foreign policy was on combatting communism and containing the Soviet Union, the United States often acted unilaterally without much consultation with the United Nations.

When the Cold War ended, many Americans believed that the United States would begin to work more closely with the United Nations. In 1990, as the United States and the United Nations joined forces to drive Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait, President George Bush predicted that the "new world order" would be characterized by collective security arrangements and unprecedented teamwork between peace-loving nations.

Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism. When President Bill Clinton entered office in 1993, he too spoke of a new era of cooperation between the United States and the United Nations. U.S. foreign policy would be less unilateral—acting alone—and more multilateral—acting in accordance with other nations and the United Nations. The president declared that the United States would remain deeply involved in international problems and would participate in UN peacekeeping missions. In addition, President Clin-

ton agreed to place U.S. forces under UN command under certain conditions.

Many experts believe that this policy surrenders too much initiative and authority to UN officials. They argue that U.S. soldiers should only be deployed under the command of U.S. officers. Furthermore, giving the United Nations the authority to commit and command American troops to global trouble spots would lead to Americans losing their lives in countries not important to U.S. national interests. Many contend that Rwanda, Bosnia, and Somalia are of no strategic or economic importance to the United States.

Supporters of greater U.S.-UN teamwork in peacekeeping believe that, unless it wants to become an isolationist country, the United States has to join forces with other nations in the United Nations. They argue that the United States no longer has the money or domestic popular support for its armed forces to act alone on the world stage. Cooperating with the United Nations will also promote greater global unity, especially with other industrialized nations.

Most international observers and UN officials believe that without the financial, military, and political support of the United States, the United Nations would be nearly ineffective. Currently, U.S. policymakers are unsure about how large a role the United States should play in UN missions. The majority of Americans are less concerned about foreign policy now than they were during the Cold War and want their government to concentrate more on domestic issues. UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has urged the Clinton administration not to turn its back on the United Nations or the world.

Supporters of a strong United Nations contend that U.S. leadership in the future is essential if the United Nations is to reform and prepare itself to meet the global challenges of the next fifty years. Most world leaders believe that the United Nations, for all its faults, must live on in the twenty-first century and that no nation—not even the United States—can singlehandedly solve global problems. They believe that the United Nations can do so, if it has the necessary support and commitment from member states. UN officials and many world leaders agree today with the words of the Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld, secretary-general from 1953 to 1961: "The United Nations reflects both aspiration and a falling short of aspiration, but the constant struggle to close the gap between aspiration and performance now, as always, makes the difference between civilization and chaos."

Nations Archives

UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.

For Further Reading

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The Breakup of the Soviet Union and How It Will Affect U.S. Foreign Policy
The world once watched as the Soviet Union created an empire. Decades later, the world watched as one by one republics seceded from this powerful union and demanded democracy. This Special Focus publication helps students understand the fall of communism and how the volatile condition of the former Soviet Union continues to affect U.S. foreign policy.

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TO THE TEACHER

The United Nations at Work: The Challenge of Building Global Peace describes the creation, structure, and activities of the United Nations. The book also examines how the role of the United Nations has changed since the end of the Cold War, citing specific UN actions and the issues surrounding difficult and expensive operations. *The United Nations at Work* provides an overview of ideas about how the organization can successfully respond to future crises. Finally, the book considers the debate over what kind of future role, if any, the United States should have in the United Nations.

The United Nations at Work Teacher's Guide offers classroom activities, handouts, and test materials around which you can create a comprehensive lesson plan. Used in conjunction with *The United Nations at Work*, this teacher's resource will help students understand the United Nations' evolving role in international events as they explore some of its peacekeeping and humanitarian missions of the last fifty years.

OBJECTIVES

This guide should help your students:

1. define the historical context and motivation for the development of the United Nations;

2. understand the basic structure and goals of the United Nations;

3. describe UN involvement in conflicts and crises and how the United Nations' role has changed since its inception;

4. debate the successes and failures of such UN operations; and

5. discuss the future of U.S. involvement in the United Nations and the extent to which U.S. foreign policy decisions should be made in accordance with UN officials.

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STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

The United Nations at Work Teacher's Guide contains the following components:

Key Terms

Key terms will help students understand the people, events, and concepts presented in *The United Nations at Work.* The following activities will help reinforce student understanding of key terms:

1. Have a group of students develop a crossword puzzle using as many key terms as possible. Distribute copies of the puzzle to students and have them complete it as a review exercise before they take the unit test.

2. Divide students into groups. Assign each group five key terms, which they are to use in a rap, a poem, or a short story. Ask students to present their creations to the class, making sure that their fellow classmates will be able to understand the meaning of the key terms from listening to the presentations.

Motivator

The motivator is an activity designed to pique student interest, introduce the class to *The United Nations at Work,* and encourage the active participation of all your students.

Student Activities

The guide includes two activities that require independent research and critical thinking. These activities highlight the important information and concepts in *The United Nations at Work.*

Student Handouts

Student handouts may be reproduced for classroom use. Each handout is part of a student activity.

Test Materials

This section contains a variety of reproducible questions that you can use to evaluate students' knowledge after you complete the lesson. Students may also use the test as a self-check tool. True/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and essay items underscore important information presented in *The United Nations at Work.*

Answer Key

The last section provides answers to all test items.

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KEY TERMS

apartheid
arms embargo
Atlantic Charter
collective security
decolonization
Economic and Social Council
economic development
famine
General Assembly
High Commission for Refugees
humanitarian aid
International Court of Justice (World Court)
isolationist
Korean War
League of Nations
less developed countries (LDCs)
mediation
multilateral
overpopulation
peacekeeping operations
refugee
Secretariat
Secretary-General
Security Council
Trusteeship Council
unilateral

MOTIVATOR

Begin by writing "United Nations" on the board. Ask students to say what comes to their minds when they think about the United Nations. Write their responses on the board. When responses have concluded, conduct a class discussion about the topic. Ask if students have a good or bad impression of the United Nations. Do they know what the United Nations does? Do they think the United Nations is important? Can they draw any conclusions about the United Nations by looking at the terms on the board?

Then explain that the United Nations was created in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II. World leaders were determined to prevent another such war, particularly in the nuclear era. Therefore, they created the United Nations, which began with 51 member nations. Since then the United Nations has grown to include 184 member states and many allied agencies. Next, circulate photocopies of **Student Handout 1—The United Nations System.** Have students look over the handout, and ask them to describe some of the tasks they think the United Nations performs based on the names of its departments and allied agencies. Are the names of some of those agencies familiar to students? If so, in what contexts have they heard of them? Do they think the United Nations serves an important function in international relations and world peace? Why or why not?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. A day or two before you begin this lesson, ask students to research the United Nations as a homework assignment. They should investigate events in recent history that have involved the United Nations such as the crises in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, or Bosnia. Urge them to look in newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals and bring copies of relevant articles to class.

   Have each student share a brief summary of his or her article with the class. Each presenter should describe the role of the United Nations in the event or crisis discussed in the news clipping. You may wish to point to specific countries on a wall map as they are mentioned in student summaries. After students complete their summaries, ask questions about the UN missions or member states discussed. In your discussion, ask students to identify the goals of those missions. Do they think those goals were met? What were the failures, if any, of the UN involvement in those crises? Tell the students to begin thinking about their own opinions about the United Nations based on the class summaries. Create a United Nations bulletin board with the articles collected by students.

   Then pass out photocopies of **Student Handout 2—Recent UN Missions and You**. Ask students to answer the questions. Conduct a discussion about the handout and their responses. How many students think the United Nations is a useful organization? How many think the United Nations could be improved?

2. Organize students for a role-play activity. Divide the class into five groups, each representing a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, China, and France). Each group should select a spokesperson to present the views of its country. Then give groups copies of **Student Handout 3—United Nations Security Council Role-Play Briefing Sheet,** which presents the situation and the views of member nations. Allow each group five to ten minutes to discuss its country's position on the scenario and how it will vote in the upcoming Security Council meeting. Next, give each nation's spokesperson two to three minutes to explain his or her country's position on the issue. To simulate an actual UN meeting, the discussion should be strictly structured, allowing no interruptions.

   After hearing all five sides, groups should reconvene for two minutes to discuss their vote. Before conducting the vote, explain that each member state in the Security Council gets one vote—yea, nay, or abstention—on each proposed option. Any permanent member of the UN Security Council can veto a resolution by voting nay, so all must agree before an action can be taken. Members who disagree but do not want to stop an action can choose to abstain from voting. If the UN Security Council cannot resolve a problem, the problem must be referred to the UN General Assembly for action. Then take votes on the three options outlined in the handout.

   Did any member nations change their opinions after hearing presentations from other members? Were students within each group able to reach a consensus on a proposed action? Were the five member states able to reach a consensus? What other possible solutions are there?

   Conclude by conducting a debriefing session about the role-play activity. Did students representing the United States think they had the power to do what they wanted in the situation? In what ways were their decisions helped or hindered by the other Security Council members? Ask students to think about the real U.S. representative in actual Security Council meetings on Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and Rwanda. What would students have done if they were representing the United States in those situations? To what extent should U.S. foreign policy actions be subject to approval by other United Nations members?

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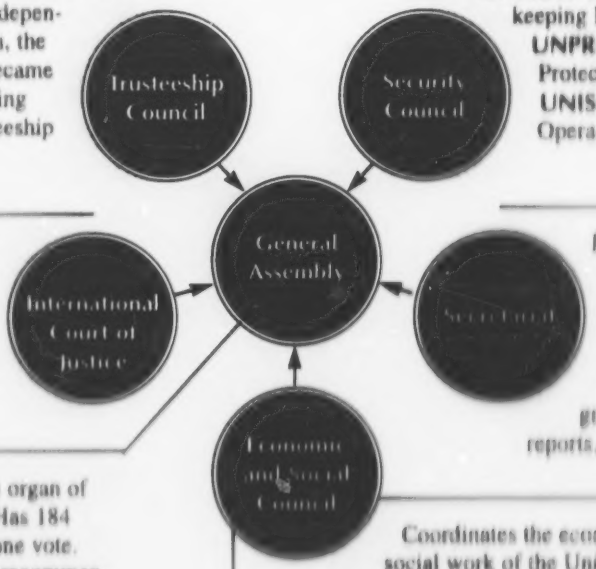
Student Handout 1

THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Made up of members of the Security Council. Charged with ensuring that governments administering Trust Territories have prepared them for self-government or independence. In 1994, Palau, the last Trust Territory, became independent, completing the work of the Trusteeship Council.

Main UN organ for peacekeeping. Fifteen members. Recent UN peacekeeping missions have included:
UNMIH (United Nations Mission in Haiti)
UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus)
UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia)
UNISOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia)



Based at The Hague, Holland. Composed of fifteen elected judges who settle international legal disputes.

Made up of an international staff, the Secretariat works for the other organs of the United Nations and administers their programs. Prepares budget, reports, etc.

The main deliberative organ of the United Nations. Has 184 members, each with one vote. Discusses and makes recommendations on all matters within the scope of the UN Charter. Subsidiary organs and organizations include:

IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)

UNDP (United Nations Development Program)
UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund)
UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research)
WFC (World Food Council)

Coordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations and specialized agencies and institutions within the UN system. Fifty-four members.

Specialized organizations include:
FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)
IMF (International Monetary Fund)
UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization)
WHO (World Health Organization)
IRBD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the World Bank)
ILO (International Labor Organization)
IDA (International Development Association)
IMO (International Maritime Organization)

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RECENT UN MISSIONS AND YOU

1. What is the most important function of the United Nations? Defend your answer.

2. Based on the presentations and discussions you just heard in class, do you think the United Nations has been successful in its missions? Why or why not? Give specific examples to support your opinion.

3. What kinds of problems has the United Nations faced recently that have affected its ability to solve international crises?

4. Could the United Nations prevent another world war? Why or why not?

5. Is the involvement of the United Nations necessary for peaceful international relations? Why or why not?

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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ROLE-PLAY BRIEFING SHEET

Welcome to the United Nations Security Council. You have been asked to represent one of the permanent members of the Security Council—either the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, or China. The Security Council's job is to maintain world peace and security according to UN guidelines.

The Security Council has received worrying news. In Burundi (a small, less developed country in central Africa), rival ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis, have massacred 1,000 people in two days, and a civil war has begun. Experts fear the civil war could spill over into neighboring Rwanda, a country that experienced similar tribal warfare in 1994. Moreover, humanitarian relief experts fear a massive refugee problem, similar to that in 1994 when Rwandans fled to Zaire.

The UN Security Council has the following options:

1. Stay out (Burundi's civil war is an internal problem).
2. Send in United Nations peacekeeping forces.
3. Send only humanitarian aid as needed.

The permanent members of the UN Security Council have the following predispositions:

The United States Although many Americans were outraged at the suffering of Rwandans in Zaire, they also remember the result of a previous humanitarian effort in Africa—the deaths of Americans in a UN peacekeeping action in Somalia. Americans seem to prefer early humanitarian action to bring relief to refugees, but not to support U.S. military action.

Russia Russian leaders are faced with their own domestic policy dilemmas and economic concerns. They do not want to act militarily, but they support humanitarian aid at some point. However, Russia cannot afford to be a major financial contributor to a humanitarian mission.

The United Kingdom British leaders want to send peacekeeping forces, but they think the forces should come from African nations that are not aligned with either side in the tribal conflict in Burundi. British officials also want to send in humanitarian aid as soon as possible, so the international community will be prepared if refugees flee; or if disease or starvation occur.

China Chinese officials do not want to act at this time. They believe that civil war should be left to the individual nation to resolve. After international criticism over the Chinese government's actions during the Tiananmen Square demonstration, they believe human rights should also be handled internally within a country, not by the United Nations.

France French leaders want to send in UN troops, including U.S. troops, to avoid another humanitarian disaster like Rwanda. They want to send peacekeepers, human rights observers, and humanitarian aid before the disaster escalates.

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TEST MATERIALS

True/False: Use **T** for true and **F** for false, and place your answer in the blank. Use the space below the item to correct any statements you think are false.

1.____ The United Nations was officially created in October 1946 in New York.

2.____ Today the United Nations has more than 180 members.

3.____ The founding document of the United Nations is called the UN Constitution.

4.____ UN peacekeeping operations must be approved by the host countries before they may be carried out.

5.____ The decade of the 1990s is a UN Development Decade.

Multiple Choice: Circle the letter preceding the best choice.

6. Which of the following did U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill create?

   a. the League of Nations
   b. the United Nations
   c. the Atlantic Charter
   d. the UN Security Council

7. Which of the following agencies is not part of the United Nations?

   a. World Health Organization
   b. International Red Cross
   c. International Monetary Fund
   d. International Atomic Energy Agency

8. According to UN guidelines, which of the following UN organs is specifically charged with maintaining peace thoughout the world?

   a. General Assembly
   b. Security Council
   c. Trusteeship Council
   d. International Court of Justice

9. In which of the following conflicts have UN armed forces *not* been involved?

   a. war in Bosnia
   b. Korean War
   c. Persian Gulf War
   d. Iran-Iraq War

10. The United Nations carried out emergency humanitarian relief for a refugee crisis in July and August 1994 in which of the following African countries?

    a. Ethiopia
    b. Angola
    c. Rwanda
    d. Sudan

Fill in the Blank: Complete each statement.

11. Civilians who have been displaced from war-torn countries are called _____.

12. The United Nations may settle disputes in several ways: through negotiation, collective military action, or diplomatic and economic _____.

13. The UN's ability to be a _____ is in doubt because its role in the world is changing, the number of conflicts is growing, the number of troops is declining, and the funding is falling short.

14. One country acting by itself is called unilateralism, while several countries acting together is called _____.

15. The U.S. dominance of the United Nations lessened when the world decolonized and the number of UN members _____.

Short Essay: Write a complete answer for each of the following.

16. How has the United Nations' peacekeeping role changed since the UN's inception fifty years ago?

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17. List two arguments for and two arguments against U.S. involvement in the United Nations.

Extra Credit

18. What was the primary controversy arising from the 1994 UN Conference on Population in Cairo? How was that disagreement settled?

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ANSWER KEY

1. F The United Nations was created in 1945 in San Francisco.
2. T
3. F The founding document of the United Nations is called the UN Charter.
4. T
5. T

6. c
7. b
8. b
9. d
10. c

11. refugees
12. sanctions
13. peacekeeper
14. multilateralism
15. increased or grew

16. From the 1950s to the 1980s, most UN peacekeeping missions involved "traditional operations." Traditional operations are enforcing cease-fire agreements, monitoring buffer zones between disputing parties, and preventing fighting from recurring. Since 1988, UN member states have performed more peace enforcement missions than peacekeeping ones. Peace enforcement missions are those that make sure that parties carry out previously negotiated peace agreements.

17. Arguments for U.S. involvement in the United Nations include:
    - The United Nations will disintegrate if the United States leaves it.
    - The United States no longer has the money or the support of its people to act unilaterally in international affairs.
    - To keep good relations with other countries, the United States must act in concert with those other nations and with the United Nations.
    - Only collective security arrangements among many nations will help bring world peace.

    The arguments against U.S. involvement in the United Nations include:
    - Placing U.S. forces under UN command in certain operations gives too much initiative and authority to UN officials.
    - Giving away this power means that at some point American troops may lose their lives in situations that are not vital to U.S. national interests.
    - Sometimes other UN member states form voting blocs to oppose U.S. policies.
    - The United Nations is an ineffective and heavily bureaucratic organization and should be dismantled.

Extra Credit

18. The UN Conference on Population faltered over how to curb the expected global population increase. Most delegates wanted to help women control their own birth rates through contraception and abortion. However, the Vatican and many Muslim countries disagreed over the language on abortion in the conference report. Everyone finally agreed on stating that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning.

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